

Abstract

System and Method for On-line Copyright Management

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A system for automated registration of digital content, i.e. a work in electronic form is described, requiring no special human interaction from the content publisher. Before publication, the digital content is electronically and automatically sent to a trusted third party, which generates a time stamped and digitally signed certificate which can be used as proof of publication date.

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A method is described to 'tag' digital content with an icon and hyperlink that can be clicked in order to properly obtain reproduction rights to digital content, according to pricing and rules (e.g. geographical restrictions, different license rules for different time frames, purchase quantity dependent pricing schedules) set by the publisher. The third party copyright buyer then receives a digitally signed copyright certificate, granting the use of the work according to certain rules and restrictions to the copyrighted material. This certificate constitutes the written permission from the publisher, necessary to reproduce the material and to prove the presence of a license. The system is preferably operated by a *trusted third party*.

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A method is also described for on-line and real-time registration of works in electronic format having digital content in which intellectual property rights such as copyright can subside, resulting in a digitally signed, time stamped certificate, the validity of which can be verified on-line. The method may provide the possibility for a content owner to specify the rules, pricing details and behavior for on-line sales of limited reproduction rights.

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